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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MASERU 000172

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SENSITIVE
FOR AF/FO, DS/FO, AF/S; RANGOON FOR PATRICK MURPHY

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [LT](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S QUARTERLY SECURITY REPORT

REF: (A) 05 MASERU 628 AND PREVIOUS (B) MASERU 124 AND PREVIOUS

CLASSIFIED BY: JUNE CARTER PERRY, AMBASSADOR, EXEC, STATE.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

Overview and Background

¶1. (SBU) The crime threat level in Lesotho remains at the critical level. The resources of the police have not increased and donors are receiving renewed requests for assistance. In light of the situation, international community representatives are seeking a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister who also holds the Security/Home Affairs portfolio to express concerns of foreigners in Lesotho. The United Nations has assigned a full time RSO with assistants as well as a 24 hour detail for its Resident Coordinator.

¶2. (C) The January shooting of the Foreign Minister (Ref B) following a fractious political party conference is yet unresolved. The impact of the attack continues to reverberate with charges and countercharges still in play. Public and private sector representatives have expressed their dismay with such an occurrence coming a year before national elections. The political conflict within the ruling LCD has been compounded by opposition party protests against potential extension of Independent Electoral Commissioners' terms; a firebombing incident against a member of parliament; and political youth leagues' distribution of inflammatory literature directed against the government.

¶3. (C) The level of discord among political parties has added to the degree of insecurity already existing due to the near 50% unemployment rate and concomitant risk of criminal attack. Against this backdrop, post reinforces its request for assignment of a full time RSO to provide professional security support to the official USG employees and their families now representing several agencies. Concentrated guard force training, residential security review and upgrades (with new personnel being assigned) are essential to achieving a proactive security posture. USG regional defense and other agency officers are attempting to increase training for local military and intelligence entities as part of long term regional capacity building. With impending elections, these efforts become even more important to stability.

¶4. (SBU) Post looks forward to Department's action on RSO assignment and appreciates DS's consideration and AF Bureau's support.

PSO Security Incidents Report

15. The following crime incidents occurred during the first quarter 2006:

-- Monday, January 2, 2006 at approximately 9:00 am, three traders were robbed of over Maloti 142,000 during an armed robbery incident that occurred at the Standard Bank Branch in Mafeteng on Monday. Three unknown armed men entered the banking hall and ordered all customers to lie down, while the other three suspects were outside threatening and beating the security officer. The bank contacted the police by phone and alarm, and allegedly the police did not respond to the call until one of the bank staff went to report the matter to the police after the suspects had fled with the money.

-- Wednesday, February 15 at approximately 7:40 am, three men robbed a Mosotho woman of her suitcase near the UN Volunteers Compound. Security Unlimited (SU) guards heard a woman crying next to their post (UN Volunteers Compound) and on investigation, they saw three men robbing a woman of the suitcase she was carrying. The SU guards immediately called the reaction team and then attempted to chase and recover the suitcase. However, the thieves threatened the SU guards with their weapons, so our guards allowed them to escape. The reaction team arrived and assisted the victim to report the case to the police.

-- Sunday, February 26 at approximately 9:30 pm, a man and his wife (both American citizens and ex-Peace Corps volunteers; she works for the World Bank) walking from Kingsway Cinema (Victoria Hotel) to the local prep school houses were held up near the traffic circle at the Prep School by two men wielding knives. They were robbed of their money (R60) and a cell phone. No one was injured. They reported the incident to the Security Unlimited guards at the prep school houses, who called their

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reaction team, who took them to the police station to open the case.

-- Saturday, February 25 at approximately 6:30 am, five men broke into a house in the Lower Thetsane area (where two U.S. Embassy officers reside and which has a large diplomatic residential presence) that is occupied by technicians working in the textile factories. The house has a panic system, but not an intruder detection alarm. Whilst most of the technicians had already left for work, two had remained in the house. The intruders gained entry into the house by lifting the sliding door out of its guide rails (the sliding door was not burglar proofed). The intruders demanded money from the two occupants, who said that they did not have any money with them. The intruders then beat one of the men, and stabbed the other man in the shoulder. While the house was being ransacked, one of the occupants managed to press the panic button. The men fled with two ATM cards and some small items. By the time the Security Unlimited Reaction team arrived, the incident was already over. The injuries sustained by the two men were not serious and the men were released from the hospital after receiving medical attention.

-- On Saturday, March 25 at approximately 10:15 pm, three or four gunmen entered a Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) restaurant (in Maseru) which was very busy. They ordered every one down to the ground and demanded money from the cashiers. The manager quickly cut all the lights in the restaurant. Customers fled through the front door. In the confusion, the suspects grabbed as much cash as they could and then exited with the crowd. According to Security Unlimited, the police arrived quite quickly. However, they were unable to distinguish the gunmen from the crowd. No arrests were made nor was anyone injured.

16. (SBU) The following Embassy security meetings were held the first quarter of 2006:

-- Daily security meetings were held at 7:45 am with LGF

contract Operations Manager, SD Coordinator and FSNI.

-- Weekly security meetings were held to discuss implementation of guard orders and procedures; monthly meetings address policy, contract issues, etc.

-- Post's PSO initiated a bi-monthly meeting of security officers from all diplomatic missions and NGOs to discuss mutual problems and concerns. The first meeting was held at the Embassy on February 2 and attended by RSO Robert Hornbeck. The second occurred on March 2, hosted by the EC delegation to Lesotho. Of greatest mutual concern is the high crime rate. Other priorities included sharing of crime information with each other, sharing ideas on how to enhance personal safety in the home and office, and forming a radio network for use in a disaster or emergency evacuation. Next meeting is set for May 4 at the U.S. Embassy.

-- COM, PC, DCM, CONS and IMO met to review EAP communications systems (March 2).

17. Visitors: RSO Robert Hornbeck visited post for one week January 30 to February 3. Two ESC Engineers from Pretoria conducted a quarterly visit to post March 3 - 10.
PERRY